

## [Hispanic Business](#)

June 12, 2009

Patricia Marroquin

The burgeoning clean energy economy is producing well-paying jobs in every state, led by California, for individuals of all education and skill levels, a study released Wednesday by The Pew Charitable Trusts shows.

And in a double dose of good, green news, Pew projected that the sector will grow significantly, propelled by higher consumer demand, infusions of venture capital, and federal and state policy changes.

Amid a battered economy, these findings are a welcome sign for everyone, including Hispanic employees and Hispanic-owned small businesses.

"We found that America's clean energy economy is really poised to explode," Lori Grange, interim deputy director of the Pew Center on the States, told HispanicBusiness.com.

"These jobs are driving economic growth and environmental sustainability at a time when America needs both," she said. "There is a potential competitive advantage for federal and state policy leaders who act now to spur jobs, businesses and investments in the clean energy sector."

After developing a clear, data-driven definition of the clean energy economy, Pew conducted a first-ever state-by-state count of jobs, companies and venture capital investments that supply market demand for environmentally friendly products and services. The study categorized the clean energy economy into five areas: clean energy; energy efficiency, environmentally friendly production; conservation and pollution mitigation; and training and support.

Pew found that from 1998 to 2007, the number of jobs in the clean energy sector grew nearly two and a half times faster than overall jobs. The national growth rate for the period was 9.1 percent, in contrast with traditional jobs, which rose by 3.7 percent. The growth in green jobs came despite a lack of sustained government support over the past decade. By 2007, the study found, more than 68,200 businesses in all 50 states and the District of Columbia accounted for about 770,000 jobs.

By contrast, the report stated, the well-established and well-funded fossil fuels sector -- which includes utilities, coal mining, and oil and gas extraction -- comprised nearly 1.3 million workers in 2007.

The private sector views the clean energy economy as a substantial and growing market opportunity, the report found. It stated that venture capital investment in clean technology topped \$1 billion in 2005; by the end of 2008 it had ballooned to about \$12.6 billion.

Among the states, California ranked No. 1 in number of jobs in the clean energy economy in 2007. "California has long been a leader in state policy when it comes to renewable energy and clean technology," Grange told HispanicBusiness.com. Others in the top 10, in descending order, are Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Michigan.

Pew's definition of clean energy jobs was wide-ranging, including engineers, plumbers, construction workers, machine setters, administrative assistants, marketing consultants and teachers. The salaries, too, ran the spectrum, with annual incomes from \$21,000 to \$111,000.

"What we did find is that this sector is not simply for either low-level workers or high-level workers. It's really a sector for everybody," Grange said.

That diversity of jobs is good news for Hispanics, who stand to benefit from the employment bounty.

Earlier this week, U.S. Rep. Ben R. Lujan, D-New Mexico, told participants at a legislative technology forum that Hispanics must play key roles in the emerging clean energy economy.

"We all know that as the Latino community continues to increase in numbers and influence, the success of a clean energy economy is dependent, in part, on involving the growing Hispanic community," Lujan said at the forum for the Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association (LISTA). "If our community is not a part of this movement, it will not only mean less opportunity for Hispanics but also a less successful green economy overall. We must ensure that our work force is trained and ready for clean energy economy, and we must help Latino-owned small businesses prepare for a clean energy economy."

Lujan, who chairs the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on Green Economy and Renewable Energy, said there are "great challenges" ahead. "But by engaging the entire country," he said, "from low-income families to small business owners, from at-risk youth to veterans, we can train workers for clean energy industries and help get our economy back on track."

Grange said educational institutions are preparing for this surge in clean energy jobs. "Anecdotally, what we're seeing in a number of states is the development of degree programs at universities and colleges in clean energy fields," she said. "That's a promising and striking finding."

While jobs of today are focused on conservation and pollution mitigation ("cleaning up some of the past practices of the last many decades," said Grange), the jobs of the future will center on clean energy development and energy efficiency. Those sectors, she said, are showing the greatest growth in jobs and venture capital. Such jobs, she said, include researchers working on solar, wind and geothermal energy development; solar panel installers; wind turbine workers; and workers who retrofit buildings to make them more energy-efficient. Two other big job growth areas are in the development of electric and hybrid vehicles; and in the construction industry, alternative building materials that are environmentally friendly.

Stimulus funds are also a factor in the growth of the clean energy economy. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allocates almost \$85 billion in direct spending and tax incentives for energy and transportation programs, Pew said.

"There is bipartisan support and a growing market demand for transitioning to the clean energy economy," said Phyllis Cuttino, director, U.S. Global Warming Campaign, at the Pew Environment Group. "Americans understand the transition is good for the overall economy, is creating new opportunities for jobs and business growth, and helps protect our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil. Congress and the Obama administration can and must produce energy and global warming legislation that creates jobs, enhances energy independence and sustains our environment."